

CHRISTIANITY the *true* RELIGION:

AN ESSAY,

In *answer* to the BLASPHEMY

Of a *Deist*.

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By Mr. ROBERT HILL.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.



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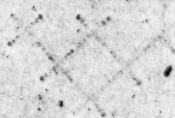
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T O

Sir JOHN CHETWODE, Bart.

In acknowledgment

Of many generous favours,

This treatise is most humbly inscribed

By his much obliged, and

Most obedient Servant,

ROBERT HILL.

Premonition, by a Friend of the Author.

OUR Author is the same extraordinary person, of whom a biographical account was published A. D. 1757, under the title of "A PARALLEL; in the manner of PLUTARCH: between a most celebrated Man of Florence, and one, scarce ever heard of, in England. By the Reverend Mr. SPENCE." This PARALLEL was republished in the second Volume of "Fugitive Pieces on various Subjects." 1761. Mr. Spence informs us that Mr. Hill was born Jan. 11, 1699. at Miswell in Hertfordshire; and was brought up at Buckingham, where he now resides. After being an honour to his country, by acquiring uncommon knowledge in the learned languages under uncommon discouragements, it is painful to reflect that Mr. Hill's learning and ingenuity have not been able to set him above the frowns of fortune, at a time when age hath oppressed him with many bodily infirmities, tho' it hath not impaired his mental faculties.

A deist some years ago had the hardiness to blaspheme CHRISTIANITY in Mr. Hill's presence, who could not bear to hear our HOLY RELIGION reviled by an ignorant stupid miscreant. He immediately wrote the ESSAY, which we now submit to the judgment of the public; by which performance he hath amply proved himself an able disputant, and "a most zealous son of the CHURCH of England."

NOVEMBER, 1775.

CHRISTIANITY *the true* RELIGION.

THAT there is a GOD, hath been the constant and uninterrupted belief of *all* Nations: except some *few* people so brutish and unpolished, as scarcely to deserve the *human* name.

Indeed the glorious appearance of this world both *animate* and *inanimate* is enough to confound *atheism*. If there be a GOD, *this* GOD must *revel* his *will* to rational creatures; or how cou'd they *know* what *duties* he requires from them? This hath been done at different times, and by different methods, till the great code of the divine will was displayed to mortals in the *Gospel* of CHRIST: which was ushered into the world by a previous publication of the *Mosaic* law. On this Gospel, as on a rock, all true followers of JESUS build their hope,

and found their happiness: amidst the scoffs of the stupid *deist*; who puffed up with the gift of REASON, and unmindful of the *giver* of that and every good gift, *denies* all *revelation*. But I hope to make it appear by this treatise, that the MIRACLES, wrought for the *confirmation* of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, are prevailing motives, to induce sincere Christians to own an exertion of the divine power, in a cause worthy of *God*. I do not deny that *pretended* miracles have been forged to deceive mankind: but a proper discrimination may easily be made between miracles *pretended* to be performed in order to *deceive*; and *true* miracles, wrought by the power of God in *confirmation* of truth and goodness. It wou'd be proper to observe, in a miracle, whether the matter of *fact* be such, as men's outward *senses* may judge of it: whether it be done *publicly*: whether *public* monuments or actions be *kept up* in *memory* of it: whether such *monuments*, *actions*, or *observances*, be instituted and do commence *from* the *time* of such matter of fact. These rules, generally attended to, will contribute much to enable us to form a right judgment between *true* and *pretended* miracles: and will leave the *deist* very little cause

to scoff impiously at the miracles recorded in the BIBLE.

When MOSES was commissioned for his great work at the burning bush, no one was present to confirm his testimony : because the *truth* of his mission was to receive *confirmation* by future *public* miracles. *Jethro*, his father in law, was a priest and prince ; for principality was then joined with the priesthood, and *one* Hebrew word signifieth both *prince* and *priest* : and yet *Jethro*, a greater man both for piety and wisdom than any *deist*, made not the least hesitation at the divine mission : he sent MOSES to his charge directly. When MOSES came to Egypt, to *declare* his mission ; and to *confirm* it by two miracles, his serpentine rod and leprous hand ; there was no objection made to it's validity : for we read the people worshipped the Lord : *i. e.* gave humble thanks to GOD for visiting his people. When he delivered his command to Pharaο, the Monarch disputed *not* the *verity* of the fact : altho' his two famous magicians pretended to do the same feats by the power of an evil spirit, who assisted them to his utmost, and carried on his delusive *appearances* with

seeming reality, till he came to *creation*; and there he *failed*: he cou'd not perform that part, which rags and nastiness perform daily. In the miraculous deliverance from Egypt, how wonderful it was to freeze up a passage of above seven miles in length, broad enough for six hundred thousand armed men, besides as many or more women and children, to pass on dry ground: and in as small a time to reduce the waters to their former course, and drown as great an army as had safely passed: and all this in the view of so many thousands! Can any *deist* deny this to be a miraculous instance of the power of God? Dare he impudently *endeavour* to confute the *eyes* and *experience* of eight or nine hundred thousand people, who were concerned in the affair? If he attempts this by his *reason*, all mankind but himself (and himself too in his own conscience) *will* and *must* allow that he wants common sense. To bring this host to *Sinai* thro' so vast a desert, and to feed them daily with angels' food, to fast forty days together in his attendance on the divine Shecinah, was not this miraculous also? If a *deist* say *no*: I only answer; let *him* do the like, and experience the vulgar proverb, that he can destroy all his flesh, and not hurt his skin. I am certain

his *reason* will not support his craving appetite *half* the time. If he is persuaded it will, only let him try the experiment to support his new-found blasphemy. The promulgation of the law with such terror, that *Moses* himself, the particular minister and favourite of God, trembled and shook exceedingly; even this will not disturb the ratiocination of our deist: he will only say it is all fable, till the last *trump* rouseth him out of his lethargy: then he will wish, and wish in vain, for a part in the SON of *David*, and an inheritance in the SON of *Jesse*. But as it appears there were no less than a *million* of evidences to the matter of fact: and every one of these endued with as good eyes and ears, and as much sense, as our deist; tho' not one of them pretended to his *art* of ratiocination: it may not be amiss to follow a *multitude* in a matter of fact, tho' we ought not to follow a multitude to do evil. When *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, with their accomplices, conspired against *Moses*; not the least instance is produced in scripture, or by *Josephus* who has related those affairs, *against* the matter of fact: indeed a superb emulation for pre-

cedency with *Moses* was, as appears, the *only* motive to the rebellion. The event that followed was in the presence of, and attested by, more than ten thousand evidences.

When the Sun stood still at the command of *Joshua*, the successor of *Moses*, the miracle was attested by more than twenty four thousand people. The miracle in the case of the dial of *Abaz*, a near parallel to this affair, was attested by the joint consent of a populous nation, all eye-witnesses: but I, studying brevity, must omit abundance of miracles recorded in holy writ.

THE PROPHETIC WRITINGS, except those delivered in the *captivity*, were usually *fixed* to the *gates* of the TEMPLE by parts, (or *visions*, as they are denominated in *our* books,) to be read by *all*: thus there were witnesses sufficient to prove they were *not forgeries*. Now the *completion* of several of the prophecies shews clearly, that they were *dictated* to the deliverers by the DIVINE SPIRIT.

PASS we on to the NEW TESTAMENT, whose *verity* the *deist* calls in question, or utterly denies. Hear what a *greater* man than ever was any *deist* says of it: "It is indeed a great degree of madness *not* to believe the " GOSPEL, whose TRUTH is *declared* by the " blood of martyrs, *resounded* by the voices of " the apostles, *proved* by miracles, *confirmed* " by reason, *testified* by the world itself, *spoken* " by the elements, *confessed* by the devils." I may add that not only the *earth*, but *all* the elements, gave testimony to our SAVIOUR's passion. The *Sun*, the world's great eye, was supernaturally darkened; the *Moon*, the other eye of the world, twice eclipsed in the space of twelve hours: the powers of *heaven* were shaken. The *earth* quaked, the *rocks* rent, and a terrible amazement seized on *all*; except our rational *deist*: who, had he then had existence, would not regard these wonderful events:—but let him alone in his infidelity; while I consider some of our SAVIOUR's miracles not inferior to these.

The conversion of water into § wine, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, I suppose, will not stagger our reasonist at all; since * Woolston has assisted him to ridicule some of our SAVIOUR'S miracles. It were well, tho' not to be wished, that Woolston had now that privilege to undeceive his deluded brethren, which the rich glutton so much desired: but as it would be of no use

§ When our Saviour changed the water into wine, it was at a wedding, which in that time, and in that country, was always celebrated in the presence of a great multitude, and with notable festivity. These people saw the WATER poured out, and in the drinking found it to be excellent WINE, better than the wine that was first brought into the room: and the evidence of so many witnesses could not but make the miracle believed, which he expected not should be believed upon a less testimony.

Earl of CLARENDON.

* Woolston was a Clergyman, but for want of bread, hath in several treatises, in the most blasphemous manner, attempted to turn our Saviour and his miracles into ridicule. He is much caressed by many great Courtiers, and by all the Infidels, and his books read generally by the Court Ladies.

Doctor SWIFT.

to people of sense, who believe *Moses* and the prophets, and a GREATER than *Moses*; let him, and his successors the deists, take their chance together.

The cure of the *blind man*, in S. John's Gospel, is such an affair taken in all its circumstances, as never had any parallel; except the creation of Adam and Eve. The man, as some very learned persons attest, was blind not only by loss of sight; but was born without any eyes at all: *i. e.* he had no sight, nor was in any possibility of having any, without such a miracle as the creation of eyes with clay and spittle. This miracle was within the attestation of a multitude of people: who must have been blind like the poor man; if they cou'd not discern a man who cou'd see, from one who had no eyes to see withal.

The raising of the daughter of *Jairus* was attested by sufficient witnesses; who mocked our

SAVIOUR, † for saying she was not *dead*, but asleep. If it be objected, as very likely it may, that she was in a *trance*, the objection is insipid. But what !

Was *Lazarus* in a trance four days together ; when called out of his grave, with his sepulchral habiliments about him ? will rationalists *contradict* the resurrection of *Lazarus* ? why do not they object against the sun-shine, and say people's eyes only dazzle, or are in a mist ?

When our LORD *fed* five thousand persons at one time, and four thousand at another, with food not sufficient for one hundred ; was *this a mist* ? were so many hungry bellies, as well as

† *When he raised the dead to life, it was always in the presence of them who had seen them living, and dead: the same eyes which saw them die, and sometimes buried, saw them likewise rise from the dead, and eat, and drink, and perform all the functions of life as other men.*

Earl of CLARENDON.

eyes, *in a mist* ; that such a multitude cou'd not tell whether they were filled or no ?

What may we think of that transaction recorded by S. John, when the high Priest's servants and the multitude came to apprehend CHRIST, and asked for JESUS of Nazareth ! he only said, EHJEH, *I am*, one of the proper names of GOD ALMIGHTY ; and " they " went backward, and fell to the ground." Is not this a miracle ? It is a certain demonstration of *his* almighty power, who willingly suffered himself to be apprehended : otherways all the powers of men and devils could not have done violence to him.

Our LORD's *suffering* a voluntary death, such as never man did ; for he died in his full strength, as appears by his loud cry when he yielded up the ghost ; is an evident proof of his deity. His *resurrection*, at the time foretold by him, is another proof : not done in the dark neither ; being attested " by more than " five hundred brethren at once." Then his

giving power to his *apostles* and *disciples* to work such miracles after his ascension, to promulge the Gospel thro' the world, notwithstanding the machinations of men and devils : — can the reason of a deist deny this ? and if he attempts it with his greatest argument — a grin, or a disdainful smile ; which doth he most deserve, to be punished for his impudence, or pitied for his folly ?

Upon the Whole :

Since the truth of HOLY SCRIPTURE is proved by many and glorious miracles, let us not doubt of it's divine original ; but rather bless GOD, for sending his Son, our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, to instruct us in the road to heaven. Let us not only believe the GOSPEL, but be *steadfast* in the practice of all CHRISTIAN duties. Let that awful day be ever in our thoughts, when the wicked “ shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life.”

